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CARDIN JOINS PRESIDENT OBAMA AT THE WHITE HOUSE AS CHIP REAUTHORIZATION BECOMES LAW

Dental benefits now guaranteed for millions of American children

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)** today attended the White House ceremony where President Barack Obama signed into law the reauthorization and extension of the ***Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)***. This legislation, which President Bush vetoed twice despite wide bipartisan support, will fund health care for approximately 6.7 million American children already enrolled in the program. The bill passed the Senate last week by a vote of 66 to 32, and passed the House earlier today 290-135.

“With the stroke of his pen, President Obama has extended health care coverage to some of America’s most vulnerable citizens – our children. This measure is critical to the health and well-being of our entire nation,” **said Senator Cardin**. “I am particularly proud that we finally have guaranteed dental benefits for the approximately 4 million children who participate in CHIP. It may have come too late to save Deamonte Driver, but – in his memory – we have finally recognized the life-saving benefits of proper dental care for children.”

The legislation signed into law today by President Obama will expand health care services to approximately 4 million children from low-income families who do not qualify for Medicaid and who would otherwise be uninsured. In Maryland, this bill will fully fund the 110,000 children currently enrolled in the Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP). It also will provide funding to expand health coverage to approximately 42,800 Maryland children who are currently uninsured.

The CHIP bill includes several of Senator Cardin’s proposals, including a guaranteed dental benefit, a dental education program for parents of newborns and a new Department of Health and Human Services website and toll-free number with information about dental coverage and a list of providers.

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